

Kate Greenaway (Catherine Greenaway)

Born London, March 17, 1846 - Died November 6, 1901

Kate Greenaway (often spelt incorrectly as Kate Greenway) was an English artist and illustrator/writer of children's book, cards, calendars and much more. Her subjects mainly consisted of children, young girls, flowers and landscapes. She was the daughter of John Greenaway a well-known draughtsman and engraver on wood.

Kate completed a course at Heatherleys life classes and the Slade School in South Kensington. It was soon after completing these studies in 1868 that she started to exhibit watercolor drawings at the Dudley Gallery in London. By 1877 her drawings at Dudley Gallery were selling for 54 pounds.

In 1868 she also started to design greeting cards for Marcus Ward. Over the years many of these were also used for calendar and book illustrations. During the period from 1868 to 1878 some of the cards were registered at Stationers' Hall but not in her name. The first recorded design at Stationers' Hall in her name was in 1879. By this stage she had also been working for other publishers such as Goodall.

Her first book, *Under The Window* (1879), a collection of simple, perfectly idyllic verses concerning children who endlessly gathered posies, untouched by the Industrial Revolution, was a best-seller.

New techniques of photolithography enabled her delicate watercolors to be reproduced. Through the 1880s and 90s, in popularity her only rivals in the field of children's book illustration were Walter Crane and Randolph Caldecott, himself also the eponym of a highly-regarded prize medal. 'Kate Greenaway' children, all of them little girls and boys too young to be put in trousers, according to the conventions of the time, were dressed in her own versions of late eighteenth century and Regency fashions: smock-frocks and skeleton suits for boys, high-waisted pinafores and dresses with mobcaps and straw bonnets for girls. The influence of children's clothes in portraits by British painter John Hoppner (1758-1810) may have provided her some inspiration. Liberty's of London adapted Kate Greenaway's drawings as designs for actual children's clothes. A full generation of mothers in the liberal-minded 'artistic' British circles that called themselves "The Souls" and embraced the Arts and Crafts movement dressed their daughters in Kate Greenaway pantaloons and bonnets in the 1880s and 90s.

She lived in an arts and crafts house she commissioned from Richard Norman Shaw in Frognal, London, although she also spent summers in the small Nottinghamshire village of Rolleston, near Southwell.

She died due to breast cancer.

The Kate Greenaway Medal is awarded annually by the UK Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals to an illustrator of children's books.

This article is based on the wikipedia entry for Kate Greenaway http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kate_Greenaway